

Communication Matters

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Online ASL Practice

If you already know the basics, watch video clips in ASL to refresh your receptive skills. Video clips are online at sites listed below. Effort has been made to choose web sites that contain G-rated content, though we can't be responsible for all content on these public sites.

For videos describing mental health issues in ASL:
<http://www.ascdeaf.com/blog/>

This site features children sharing poetry, a must see!
<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/dv/DVASL/asldefault.html>

This site contains children's stories in ASL:
<http://www.youtube.com/user/1001booksinASL>

To keep up on Michigan issues see the Michigan Deaf Community Press: <http://michigandeafcommunity.wordpress.com/>

Sign Language Proficiency Interview

The Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) is based on the Language Proficiency Interview (LPI), which was developed at the Language School of the U.S. Foreign Service Institute after World War II. According to Michigan Department of Education materials, the purpose of the SLPI is to determine how well an individual can use sign language for communication on a variety of social and work topics.

The SLPI is best used as a teaching tool, helping the signer to refine and improve communication skills based on concrete, objective feedback. Some state vocational rehabilitation programs require counselors who serve customers who are deaf to take the SLPI. It is used extensively with staff and students at Michigan School for the Deaf.

The SLPI involves a one-to-one conversation between a trained SLPI interviewer and a candidate. Generally, interviews are conducted in sign language communication only, with no speech. This protocol is followed because research and experience have shown that people generally demonstrate their highest sign language communication skills when using sign language alone. The SLPI is a criterion referenced test (based on predetermined standards) rather than a norm referenced test (comparison between individuals).

According to the *Model State Plan for Rehabilitation of Person who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing or Late Deafened*, a level of "Intermediate" or higher is recommended to effectively communicate with vocational rehabilitation customers who are deaf. A person with an **Intermediate** rating is :

"able to discuss with some confidence routine social and work topics within a conversational format with some elaboration; generally 3-to-5 sentences. Good knowledge and control of everyday/basic sign language vocabulary with some sign vocabulary errors. Fairly clear signing at a moderate signing rate with some sign misproduction. Fair use of some sign language grammatical features and fairly good comprehension for a moderate-to-normal signing rate; a few repetitions and rephrasing of questions may be needed."

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The Lowly Telecoil

By Cheryl Davis

The telecoil isn't new technology—but this simple and dependable hearing aid option can make the difference between tuning in or tuning out.

Hearing aids and cochlear implants can be very effective in quieter settings, but noise can interfere with a hearing device's effectiveness. For people who have a hearing loss, the sound that they want to hear (signal) needs to be significantly louder than other ambient sounds (noise) to be intelligible. Although hearing aids may have technology that reduces background noise, it often compromises the speech signal. That's why an additional assistive listening device (ALD) is so important, and the telecoil is a simple option to connect ALDs to hearing aids.

Telecoils work by induction. A wire with a current running through it naturally gives off a magnetic field. If another wire is placed near it, the magnetic field in one induces a field in the other. Magnetic fields carry signals. Sometimes the information is disorganized (e.g., static), and sometimes it is organized (e.g., music or speech)...

Read the full article at: http://www.pepnet.org/newsletter/2008_spring/page3.asp



Textual representation of a video's sound track may be called captions or subtitles. Captions help deaf and hard of hearing viewers to follow the script and are also useful for improving the reading and listening skills of people with learning disabilities or those for whom English is a second language.

When video is uploaded to the web, a text alternative, such as captions will broaden access to viewers. As a bonus, search engines will find your video more quickly, insuring that the video will reach a wider audience.

Caption it Yourself provides guidance for anyone interested in making video accessible. For more information see: <http://www.dcmp.org/ai/ciy/>

Sign Language Proficiency Interview

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What is the benefit for having a SLPI assessment?

- Provides documentation of proficiency level of American Sign Language (ASL)/sign language communication skills.
- Provides a specific level of sign language proficiency which gives a global assessment of receptive (understanding) and expressive (produce sign information) signing proficiency skills at the time of the interview.
- Provides evidences of minimum competency skills for a position where sign language skills are required.
- Provides information about specific sign language intervention strategies to help target underdeveloped areas of sign language communication.
- Provides evidence that progress is being made if a candidate has not achieved the expected level of sign language competency needed for a position that requires sign language skills.

For information on the SLPI as used in Michigan, contact:

Diana McKittrick, SLPI Coordinator
Phone: 1-888-760-2206 (voice/tty)
Email: msdb-outreach@michigan.gov

For questions on hearing aids, technology, deafness or workplace accommodations...

Easy access to answers for MRS staff is paid for by a contract with MADHH.

Contact: MADHH at info@madhh.org

1-800-968-7327

or Julie Eckhardt at

231-590-2764 &

julie@madhh.org



Study Seeks Participants with Sensory and/or Mobility Impairments

If you have a sensory impairment and/or mobility impairment, you may be eligible to participate in a new research project. This research aims to understand what people with sensory and/or mobility impairments do in their daily lives, how their environments affect their community participation and what, if any, help they need to complete activities.

Eligibility requires that you:

- Are between the ages of 18 and 75
 - Live in the community
 - Have access to a computer
 - Can read at or above the 6th grade level
 - Can enter responses into a web-based survey or direct another individual to enter your responses
- AND
- Have either a mobility impairment, a visual impairment, or a hearing impairment

If eligibility is established you will receive a code to log on to the survey site and complete the study. All information will be kept confidential and no connection between you and your survey answers will be made. Participants will be reimbursed by either a personal check or by a gift certificate to either Target or Walgreens, and may choose the method of reimbursement they prefer. The web-based assessment contains a set of two surveys and will take approximately one hour to complete.

Please click on the link below and you will be directed to a short pre-survey to determine eligibility.

<http://emc.wustl.edu/Nscr/Nscrlogn.htm>

This study is conducted by the Washington University Program in Occupational Therapy in collaboration with Paraquad, Inc. This research is funded by the National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research at the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research at the US Department of Education.

Together Rx Access: Prescription Drug Savings

The Together Rx Access* Card was created as a public service by a group of some of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies like Abbott, Pfizer, Novartis, Sanofi, LifeScan, etc. , in order to provide savings on prescriptions to eligible residents of the US and Puerto Rico who have no prescription drug coverage.

Over 300 brand-name prescription products for diabetes, high blood pressure, ADHD, depression, allergies, and many other conditions are included in the Together Rx Access* Program. Savings on generic drugs are also available and vary by pharmacy. The Together Rx Access* Card is accepted at the majority of pharmacies nationwide and in Puerto Rico.

Individuals for whom all four of the following statements are true qualify for a Together Rx Access* card:

1. Not eligible for Medicare (65 and below).
2. Have no prescription drug coverage of any kind.
3. Household income is equal to or less than:
 - \$30,000 for a single person
 - \$40,000 for a family of two
 - \$50,000 for a family of three
 - \$60,000 for a family of four
 - \$70,000 for a family of five
 - Families of six or more should contact the Together Rx Access Program at 1-800-444-4106 or visit the web site to determine eligibility.
4. Legal resident of the United States or Puerto Rico.

More info can be found at

<http://www.togetherrxaccess.com/Tx/jsp/home.jsp>

iTransition

High school seniors scurry when the time comes to prepare for graduation. Students and their parents are deciding whether the next step is college, technical school or a job. PEPNet has released a free online training series designed to help students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing transition successfully from high school to postsecondary education or work.

Follow this link to read the full article online

http://www.pepnet.org/newsletter/2008_spring/default.asp

Vocational Services and Working with People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Working with Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:

September 8th - October 13, 2008.

Vocational Services for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:

October 20th - November 24, 2008.

Providing ethical services to people who are deaf or hard of hearing can present a unique challenge for service providers, whether they are new to the field of rehabilitation or seasoned professionals. The goal of these courses is to enhance professionals' abilities to understand and effectively provide services for individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

Working with Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing focuses on communication and culture aspects. Units include Deaf Culture and Language, Working with Sign Language Interpreters, and Assistive Listening Devices. This course is appropriate for people with minimal experience with individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing. See the syllabus (PDF) for more information.

Vocational Services for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing is a more advanced course recommended for professionals who have some familiarity with psychometric testing or are willing to learn about testing concepts. The goal is to increase participants' familiarity with the range of services available to individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing and enable them to make effective referrals or increase their abilities to provide services themselves. Units include Employment Services, Psychometric Assessment, and Vocational Assessment.

Ten credit hours/1 CEU will be provided for each course. Two of the ten hours in each course are ethics credits. CRC credits are pre-approved. RID credits can be received through PINRA.

Registration will open in August, 2008.

Both courses will be offered again in 2008. Check our web site in April 2008 for dates or contact April Pierson (piersona@uwstout.edu) to be notified.

More information:

PEPNet flyer (PDF format) http://rlr.uwstout.edu/documents/pepnet_no_date_blue.pdf

April Pierson: piersona@uwstout.edu or (715) 232-1685